



## **Rutgers University Libraries Strategic Plan, 2006-2011**

**April 2006**

### **Summary**

Over the next five years, the Rutgers University Libraries will focus on creating a physical and virtual library environment that enriches the academic life of the university for student learning, that advances faculty and graduate student research, and that supports the university's mission of service and outreach. The Libraries' facilities will become more comfortable, welcoming, and usable with wireless throughout, group study and quiet spaces, and a technology-rich environment. Creation of a rich virtual environment with significant information resources, services, and tools to support research and learning and easy and powerful navigation and finding tools will integrate the Libraries into the university's research and learning programs. The virtual library will be integrated into course management systems to connect students with resources and services in the virtual academic environment where they work. By partnering with the teaching faculty, information literacy skills will be integrated into the curriculum to ensure that students graduate with the skills for their careers and for lifelong learning. The combined themes of focus and integration will guide decision-making, task selection, and priority setting for collections, services, technology, buildings, and human and financial resources.

To implement the new plan, the Libraries will develop annual action agendas keyed to the strategic goals we have identified. Those agendas, which reflect annual priorities, will be based in large measure on the amount of resources that can be made available through budget allocations, through our ability to capitalize on opportunities to leverage collaboration with others, and through our success with grants and external fund raising.

The Rutgers University Libraries' strategic goals over the life of this plan are to:

- Improve the quality of scholarly resources and information services that support the advancement of academic excellence at Rutgers
- Enhance the effectiveness of library services for students and the development of library facilities as learning and community-building spaces
- Improve awareness of the resources, services, and support available to all of the Libraries' constituencies
- Increase the Libraries' resources to the levels of peer AAU public universities and manage those resources more strategically and effectively
- Continue to develop an organization and the human resources to achieve the Libraries' strategic goals

## Introduction

The Libraries' new five-year strategic plan builds on the success of the previous plan, *A Bridge to the Future: the Rutgers Digital Library Initiative*. What was new about that plan was a recognition that the Rutgers University Libraries, like all other major academic libraries, were in a major transition, a transition from an exclusively print environment to a print and digital environment. *A Bridge to the Future* had as its theme the application of technology to enhance the delivery of services to the desktop, anywhere and anytime, and the delivery of information content - our collections - to our users as well. In retrospect, this now hardly seems revolutionary. Back then, even that short while ago, it was very new. Over the last five years, the Libraries have introduced numerous digital services, and we now spend a significant portion of the collections budget on digital resources. In addition, we are creating new digital resources, such as the *Rutgers Community Repository*, the *New Jersey Digital Highway*, *Electronic New Jersey*, and several open access journals. We have more than fulfilled our goals; where do we go from here?

The themes of our new five-year plan are *focus* and *integration*. Focus recognizes that we need to pay particular attention to the strategic goals of Rutgers and focus our energies on where we add value to the academic programs - enriching the undergraduate experience and enhancing research support for our faculty and graduate students. There will be an even greater emphasis on the use of information technology than in the past, but the focus will be on *integrating* our digital services and collections seamlessly with each other and into the environments of the undergraduates and researchers - incorporating "the library" into the way students learn and how faculty and graduate students do research.

What will that mean in practice? For students, it may mean that the relevant library collections and services become integrated into the course management systems that they will increasingly use for their classes. Rather than coming to the Libraries' website as the only entrée to information they need, students will find their reserve readings, other course related information sources, helpful learning tutorials, and appropriate research guides incorporated into their online course management systems. We will be partners with the faculty to *integrate* information literacy competencies into the curriculum to ensure that students graduate with the skills that will make them successful in their careers and as lifelong learners.

When students come to the Libraries to study by themselves or in a group or to discuss their work with a faculty member, they will find group study rooms, quiet study alcoves, a café, and comfortable seating for socializing - spaces more attuned to how students now work. We will pay attention to the particular needs of graduate students and their needs for space, such as graduate carrels and quiet study spaces. The Libraries will be completely wireless so that students can use whatever PC or iPod they like, but there will still be plenty of computer workstations available. If they choose to expand beyond the course-related materials, our library website will be as simple as Google to navigate. We will have implemented software that allows anyone to search simultaneously for books in IRIS, articles in multiple databases, and the new digital collections we create. By working with the Office of Information Technology to create a robust technology infrastructure on all campuses, we will be able to stream media to classrooms and PCs.

For faculty, we will be developing a technology infrastructure to collect, deliver, and preserve our faculty's research that will assist not only in connecting faculty to each other but also in enhancing the visibility and the impact of their research. We will acquire and develop tools that make arranging and citing information easy. We will, of course, continue to acquire both print and digital information that support our academic programs at the level of our peer institutions. We will also digitize some of our unique collections, such as those in jazz, New Jersey history, cultural history, women's studies, and women's art, to give them broader exposure and expand their value for instruction and research.

The new five-year plan addresses what we learned from our students and faculty through a year-long planning process that included the LibQual+™ survey, the communications audit, numerous focus group discussions, and departmental surveys. Those findings helped us envision both a virtual and a physical library that is more *integrated* into the academic life of our students and faculty and *focused* on what they need most.

## **The Environment**

The 21st century will be a time of great change for research libraries. During the coming decades, the Rutgers University Libraries and its peers will be challenged to be leaders in a world where information is abundantly available, where expectations come from many contexts, where new infrastructures must be built, where there is an imperative to provide easy access to scholarly resources, and where there is opportunity and obligation to provide leadership on campus in matters that contribute to the public good. At the same time, there will be competition for the financial and human resources required for meeting these challenges. With a rich, complex environment typical of a large public research university with very high ambitions, Rutgers The State University of New Jersey needs libraries that are recognized as excellent, that are responsive to institutional change and priorities, and that contribute university leadership in areas of their expertise, such as copyright, intellectual freedom, and access to government information.

President Richard L. McCormick has introduced a number of important initiatives, and many of these will affect the Libraries. The resulting activities that will most challenge the libraries over the life of this plan are:

- The university is building excellence in strategic areas that are multidisciplinary.
- The university is seeding innovation in new research areas through small internal grants that will lead to substantial external funding.
- The report of the New Brunswick/Piscataway Task Force on Undergraduate Education acknowledges the importance of incorporating critical thinking, which is comprised of information competence and reasoning, into the curriculum.
- There is increased commitment to instructional services for undergraduate education. One example is the high-level Office of Instructional and Research Technology with which the Libraries are a partner.
- There is an increased emphasis on facilities and campus environments, especially on classroom space, and the need for spaces that create a sense of community and re-engage faculty into campus life.

- While the merger of Rutgers, UMDNJ, and NJIT did not take place, there remains a strong desire to continue to build collaborations among the three universities.
- Administrative changes in budgeting, policy implementation, and planning are moving many processes from the central university administration to campus provosts, deans, and directors, including the university librarian. The combination of “all funds budgeting” and devolution requires new methods of collaboration.
- The findings of the recently completed *Rutgers Constituency Research Project Consultant’s Final Report* will set an agenda for how the university presents itself, provides outreach, and communicates with the State.
- One capital campaign has just been completed, another is planned, and a new foundation president has been named.

The Information Technology Strategic Planning Committee established in the spring 2004 was charged with developing a university wide strategic plan for information technology. The Libraries’ strategic plan developed simultaneously with the information technology strategic plan, and the two plans will mutually support and benefit from each other to provide the information technology infrastructure for unprecedented access to collections and services within the Libraries and to scholarship created throughout the university.

Rutgers students and faculty are diverse racially and ethnically and have high expectations for library resources and services:

- Faculty come from many places in the world and engage in a number of international activities and programs, a broad range of disciplines, and collaborate extensively across disciplines. They use a variety of courseware packages and expect the Libraries to provide collections, services, expertise, speed, convenience, and reliability 24/7. They assume that the high cost of doing so will be supported as a part of normal university operations.
- The student body is also internationally diverse and includes many transfer students from community colleges across the state and returning adult learners. Students are media savvy, including being avid users of instant messaging and mobile devices, and heavy users of Google. Students expect good resources, help, study and social spaces, speed, convenience, and reliability 24/7.

Rutgers faces the same challenges as other research universities in acquiring adequate financial resources. Public universities are challenged to make the case for escalating resources at the state level. Of necessity, major gifts, grants, and other external fund raising are now part of the shifting resources environment.

The Libraries have benefited with funding from various special funding programs; but these special funds do not assure continuing investment in the Libraries’ infrastructure, collections, services, and human resources. These programs have included internal grant programs and a presidential excellence fund developed to fund areas of excellence and priority at Rutgers and bond programs for buildings and computing equipment from the State of New Jersey.

## **Strategic Goals**

The Rutgers University Libraries have developed our strategies in the context of the university's goals and aspirations. Over the past year and a half, we have consulted broadly with the university community and identified numerous activities where students, faculty, and administrators believe the Libraries can positively impact their work. The recent LibQual+™ survey of faculty and students provided guidance in identifying our users' priorities and service areas needing attention. In addition, the University Librarian's Cabinet invited statements from librarians and library staff on topics of particular concern and interest. User and library recommendations are incorporated into these goals statements.

### ***Academic Excellence***

Improving the quality of Rutgers' academic programs and supporting research are important goals for the university and key goals of our plan. Development of the Libraries' collections will necessarily require an increase in collaborative partnerships with teaching faculty, instructional support offices, and research faculty in strategic research areas, many of which are multidisciplinary. The Libraries will concentrate on developing nationally and regionally recognized collection depth in strategic research areas and in areas of current strength, such as jazz, New Jersey history and culture, and women's scholarship and leadership. The Libraries will work within the framework of open access to develop resources and services that support strategic research areas and undergraduate learning, especially information literacy. The Libraries will use technologies developed for the Rutgers Community Repository (RUcore), our digital archive, to integrate access to all formats of scholarly resources, whether analog or digital; text or media; owned, licensed, or borrowed. The Libraries will support scholarly digital resources developed at Rutgers by providing streamlined, integrated, and permanent access to these resources.

### **Strategic Goal I: Improve the quality of scholarly resources and information services that support the advancement of academic excellence at Rutgers**

- Expand the collections both electronic and in print to the level of our peer institutions
- Adopt or develop tools that provide easy, seamless, reliable, and convenient access to both online and traditional scholarly resources, wherever they are located, such as cross-database searching, link resolvers, and citation software
- Address information competency standards for students through information literacy materials, services, and programs in partnership with the teaching faculty
- Support academic excellence and a richer intellectual life at the university through increased diversity of the Libraries' workforce
- Build a preservation program for the collections in all formats to ensure that critical and unique collections remain available in perpetuity
- Focus the creation of digital resources on the Libraries' unique collections and on the output of Rutgers University, with an emphasis on support for the faculty research process

- Develop services that facilitate scholarly communication and support the research in process among researchers at Rutgers
- Advocate for university and faculty participation in the open access movement to increase the impact of our faculty's research and expand access to scholarly information
- Enhance the reciprocal partnerships, including collaboration with UMDNJ and NJIT, that provide Rutgers faculty and students seamless access to collections outside the university
- Continuously improve services by utilizing assessment and accountability indicators that measure needs and impact

### ***Students and Campuses***

The availability of a significant number of full-text resources on the Internet and the provision of many library services electronically, such as e-reserves and reference, has had an impact on how students and faculty now want to access the library and how they are using the library as a "place." Surveys and focus group discussions have emphasized the need for enhanced digital services and information, as well as physical spaces that are well-maintained, that are conducive to group study and discussion, that provide quiet areas, that are technology rich, and that integrate study and socialization.

### **Strategic Goal II: Enhance the effectiveness of library services for students and the development of library facilities as learning spaces**

- Focus on upgrading the maintenance and physical library environment, so that all libraries are welcoming, comfortable, safe and secure, and easy to navigate
- Expand wireless availability and the number of public access computers across the libraries
- Organize print library collections to respond to efficient delivery services and reciprocal borrowing opportunities
- Relocate lesser used print collections to the Annex to recoup space in all libraries to create spaces associated with the ways students and faculty want to work and socialize, such as group studies, cafes, social spaces, quiet areas, etc.
- Work toward the development of a consolidated science library with better support for multi-disciplinary studies

### ***Service and Constituency Relations***

The university's constituency report and the Libraries' communications survey highlight the need for better communication with all constituencies to let them know of the services and resources available to them at the university and the positive impact that the Libraries' can have on their work.

### **Strategic Goal III: Improve awareness of the resources, services, facilities, and support available to all of the Libraries' constituencies**

- Develop and implement marketing and communications plans for university and statewide constituencies

- Collaborate with university programs and offices to enhance communication about services and resources
- Ensure that library liaisons effectively communicate information about library services, collections, and programs to university departments, centers, and institutes and share changes and developments in departments, centers, and institutes with the Libraries
- Leverage the liaison relationship to departments, centers, and institutes to understand and support the development of new research methodologies in the disciplines
- Use our participation and leadership in collaborative statewide and regional initiatives, such as VALE and PALCI, to develop additional tools to share resources and services

### ***Resources for Rutgers***

In the digital environment, the portion of the Libraries' budget that is allocated to recurring costs is growing. Unlike books, commercial digital collections are subscription-based with high yearly inflation. Staffing costs are recurring, and technology requires ongoing maintenance contracts. State support is a smaller percentage of the university budget and pressures for new campus programs and infrastructure upgrades are escalating. In addition to seeking a greater percentage of the university budget, the Libraries must seek external resources and internal, statewide, and national partners to enhance their services.

### **Strategic Goal IV: Increase the Libraries' resources to the levels of peer AAU public universities and manage those resources more strategically and efficiently**

- Secure resources to bring the Libraries to the level of peer institutions and to support new areas of academic and research excellence through a budget process that recognizes inflation and new programs, through strategic grants and partnerships, and through targeted fund raising
- Increase the collections endowments and general academic program support in the next capital campaign
- Partner with university and campus offices in ways that leverage the resources of each organization to support new research methodologies and new ways of teaching and learning
- Allocate resources based on the strategic directions of the five-year plan

### ***Leadership, Administration, Human Resources***

Academic libraries are changing rapidly as technologies influence where and how resources are available, how research is conducted, and how students learn. As a result, new skills are needed; and existing staff need continual opportunities for professional development. There is a greater need for highly trained technical support personnel, project managers, and leadership skills.

### **Strategic Goal V: Continue to develop an organization and the human resources to achieve the Libraries' strategic goals**

- Continue to focus the development of library leadership in copyright, intellectual freedom, and access to government information
- Invest in staff development and recognition, and support organizational development, including the areas of managing people and resources
- Examine all vacant positions for possible redesign to support the Libraries strategic plan and take into account the university's new major multidisciplinary research areas, recruit the highest caliber librarians and staff, and reassign positions strategically

## **Implementation: Turning Goals into Action**

Collectively, these goals represent the Libraries priorities over the next five years. We will continue to work broadly across the multiple fronts embodied in these interdependent goals. To implement the new plan, the Libraries will develop annual action agendas keyed to the strategic goals we have identified. Those agendas, which reflect annual priorities, will be based in large measure on the amount of resources that can be made available through budget allocations, through our ability to capitalize on opportunities to leverage collaboration with others, and through our success with grants and external fund raising. Our plan has been based on significant input from the university community and the realization that these directions will advance instruction and research. As such, we are confident that, with the university's support and sufficient resources, the faculty and students at Rutgers will benefit from the vision embodied in this plan – a vision that will contribute to placing Rutgers in the top quartile of AAU institutions.